

2/14/72

Al:

Am enclosing a copy
of Western Profile —
a company magazine
printed for western Geological
employees.

Since they included an
article on your Island
I thought you might
like to have a copy.

Best regards

Paul (Moody)

WESTERN
PROFILE



WINTER 1971-72

Exploring Santa Rosa Island

Requires Unusual Logistics

Contributors:

Story

George Underwood
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Photos

Charles Martin
Client Representatives

EVER DREAM of owning your own private island? Getting away from it all? No noisy freeways; no jets roaring overhead; no cluttered-up slums; clean, clear air overhead; not even any roads or trails except those you make yourself on horseback or with a jeep. A nice, quiet, balmy island loaded with wildlife that only you hunt; sandy beaches where only you surf or fish; 4,000-foot mountains that only you climb and where ancient Indian burial grounds and artifacts can still be found relatively undisturbed by civilization. Well, one of Western's most interesting recent surveys was carried out by Party 9 in just such a place — and believe it or not the place is only a few minutes by air from smoggy, crowded Los Angeles.

Now, of course, neither Western nor its client is fortunate enough to own this island! It required only one permit, however, for an entire two-month prospect; and this permit was obtained not from a state or federal department but from a California rancher whose family has owned the island for over 75 years.

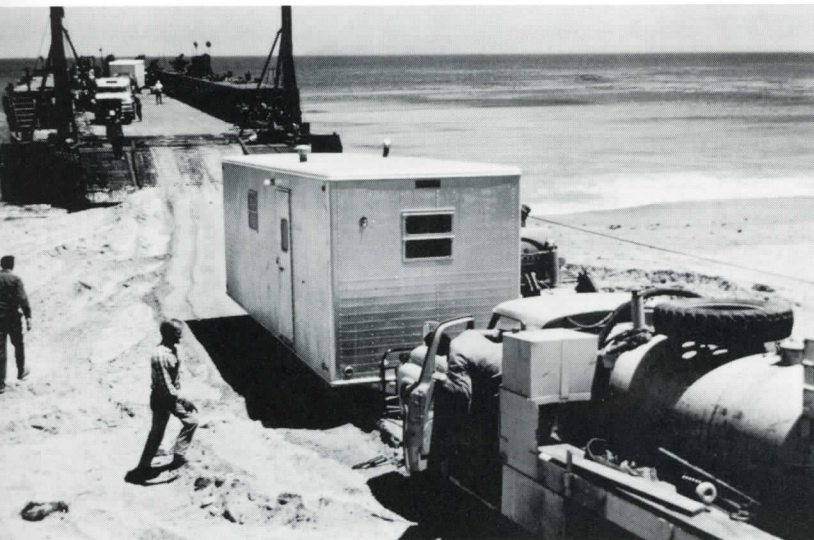
The island itself is covered with various range grasses and a few stands of oak and pine and is operated as a cattle ranch. Only seven cowhands, plus a foreman, are required to oversee a hundred square miles of island ranch. Not much problem here with cattle rustling. Neither is there much problem with diseases that, once started, can spread across hundreds of herds on the mainland. The extreme environmentalists who think that only governmental agencies are capable of intelligently using land and therefore should have control of most of it should see what this California ranching family has done to preserve the natural state of their beautiful island.

Trails have been made only where absolutely needed for ranching purposes. The island ranch has only two

motorized vehicles on it, all other work being done with horses. They have protected their herds of deer, elk, wild pigs, and dwarf foxes. No outside hunters are allowed on the island. In fact, no one is allowed on the island without first obtaining permission from the owners. Any

With no port or dock facilities on Santa Rosa Island, Party 9's equipment was transported from the mainland by barge and unloaded onto this sandy beach. The bulldozer landed earlier had smoothed the hill beyond the beach so that the units could negotiate it.





One of the camp trailers is off the barge and ready to be pulled up the hill (picture below) as soon as the water truck turns around and hitches to it. The Pacific Ocean is in the background.

vehicles brought to the island must first be thoroughly steam-cleaned and provided with spark arresters. The steam cleaning is to prevent introduction to the island of any mainland contamination, the spark arresters to prevent fires started from auto exhausts.

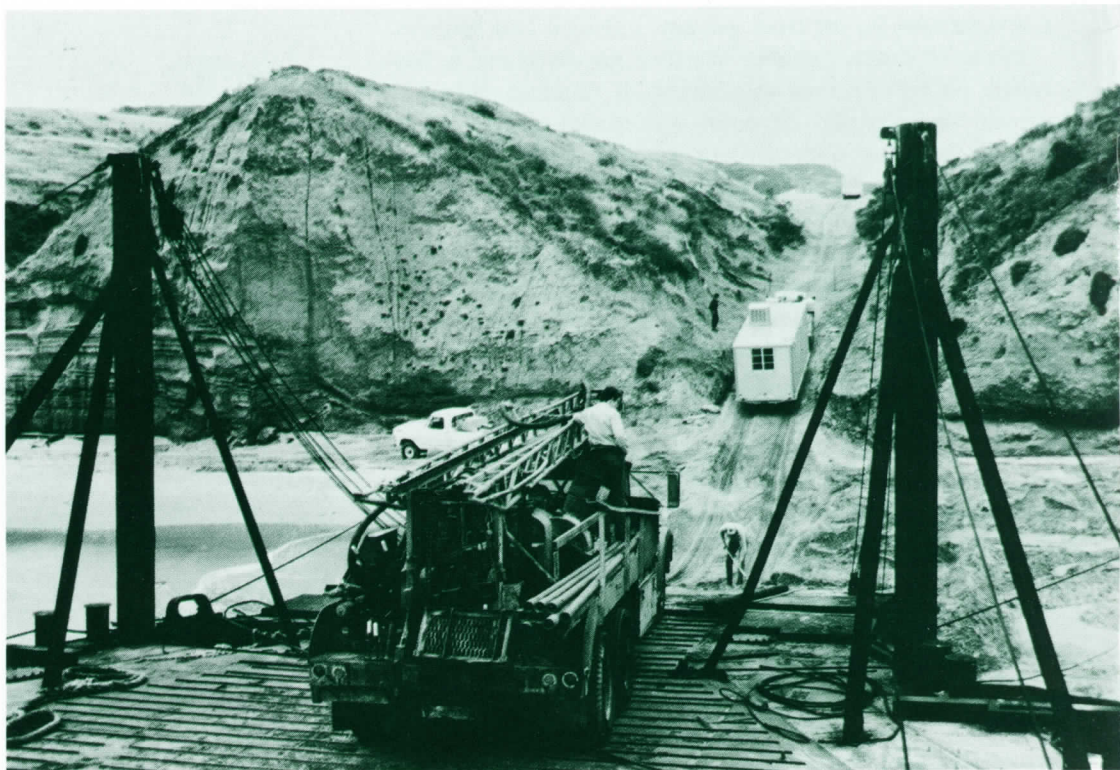
Thus, it is not hard to understand then that when this rancher decided to allow exploration for oil on his island

he set up reasonable and livable but very stringent regulations as to how such exploration — and hopefully future production — would be carried out. Now, in retrospect, the geophysical operation has to be considered a prime example of how ranching and oil exploration can be carried on together with a minimum of friction between parties and with a minimum of damage to the environment. It is “dual purpose usage” at its best, and no governmental agency was involved.

As already stated, this prospect is surely one of the most interesting ever undertaken by Western within the United States. By its very nature, however, it also demanded very unique operational procedures. Since it is an island, how do you get your equipment there in the first place? There are no port facilities, no docks, no airstrips other than a short cow pasture strip where only light planes can land; and basic to our client's permit to work on the island was the understanding that no new airstrip would be bulldozed. The only solution then would be to land the equipment on the beach using a shallow-draft landing craft. The California surf can be rough, though; so the landing must be planned precisely with the tide changes in mind.

Now, once you get your equipment landed, you have to have a place to house your personnel. The ranch house could accommodate only the ranch crew; so this meant a trailer camp and cook must be provided for the seismic crew. Since there are no service stations or garages on the island, you have to provide your own fuel and your own equipment shop, your own spare parts. The fuel

Now a drill truck rolls off the barge to follow two of the trailers up the hill to Party 9's camp site on the private island.





The lack of housing, garages, restaurants, and the like on the island meant that Party 9 had to be a camp crew complete with sleeping, mechanic's, and cooking and dining trailers. This camp equipment was brought from Denver to Long Beach, California, from where it was barged to the island.

could be taken care of through use of a 3,000-gallon gasoline tank trailer. A mechanic's shop and a mechanic could take care of the lack of commercial garage facilities. There are no grocery stores on the island; so all food-stuffs must be shipped in. The staples could be sent in by boat, the perishables by light aircraft.

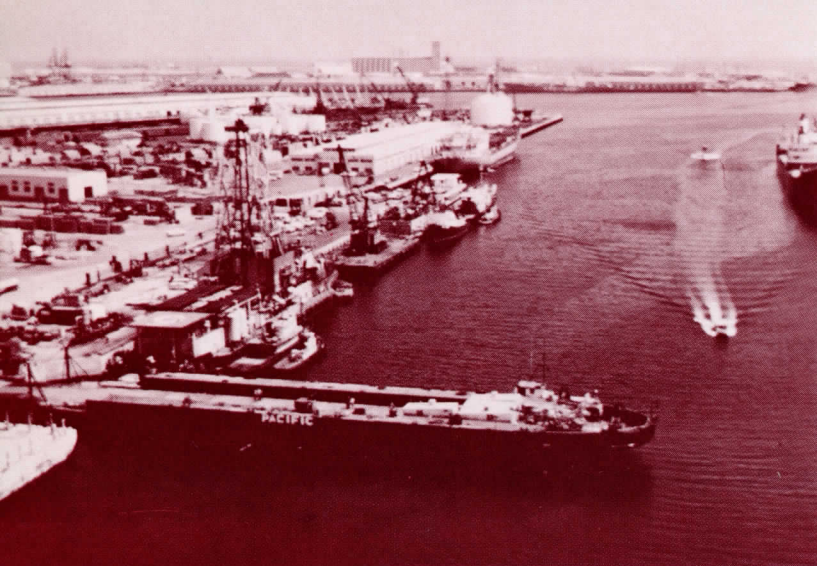
Our client's permit also required that the Western party chief and the client representative be present on the island at all times when work was under way. This meant then that someone else had to be stationed on the mainland to insure that items needed by the crew got to them, whether by sea or by air. An expeditor and small office at the nearest mainland point could do this.

You have now made plans to get the equipment and personnel to the island; you have provided for expediting, food, fuel, spare parts, and the hundreds of other items necessary for a self-supporting operation. Planning it and doing it are two different things, though. The advance planning was, we thought, complete, however; and the day was soon approaching that would test our theory. The beach landing operation itself was to be the biggest and most important first step necessary to start operations, also the most hazardous and most dependent upon the elements.

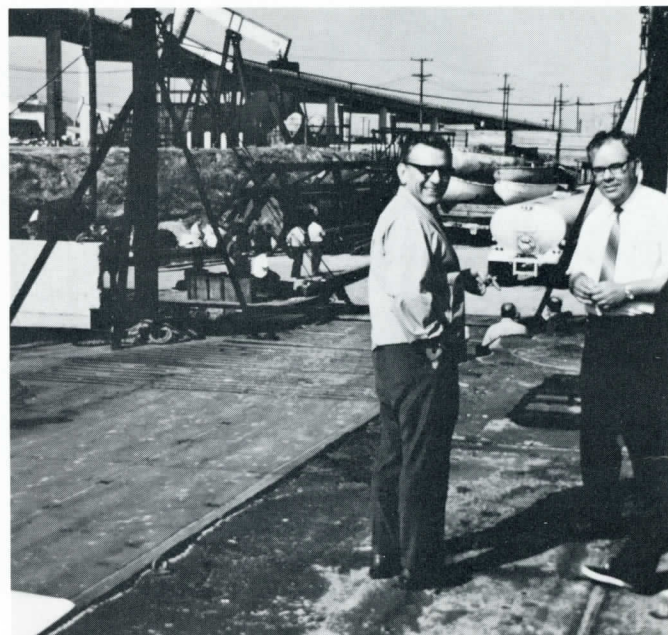
As our advance planning progressed, it was decided that to attempt to load everything on one barge and make only one assault at the beach was perhaps a little too ambitious. Suppose rough seas or turbulent surf were

encountered on the appointed day, and suppose the landing craft could not hold the position on the beach necessary to unload the many pieces of equipment and trailers, plus supplies. A preliminary assault with only a few key pieces of equipment might insure the success of the major landing. This, then, was the decision made by Western and client personnel after careful survey of the island and





Left — This is where all Party 9 equipment left the mainland for the private island; this is the port of Long Beach, California. Below — Manager of Operations H. F. (Murph) Murphree (left) and Assistant Supervisor J. W. (Jim) Sickles visit the Party 9 equipment assembly area at the dock.



possible beaching points. A small landing craft would be loaded with a bulldozer and several light units, and an attempt would be made to land this equipment a few days in advance at exactly the spot selected for the major invasion. If this were successful, the bulldozer could then plant anchors on the beach for the larger landing craft that would carry the bulk of the crew to tie onto.

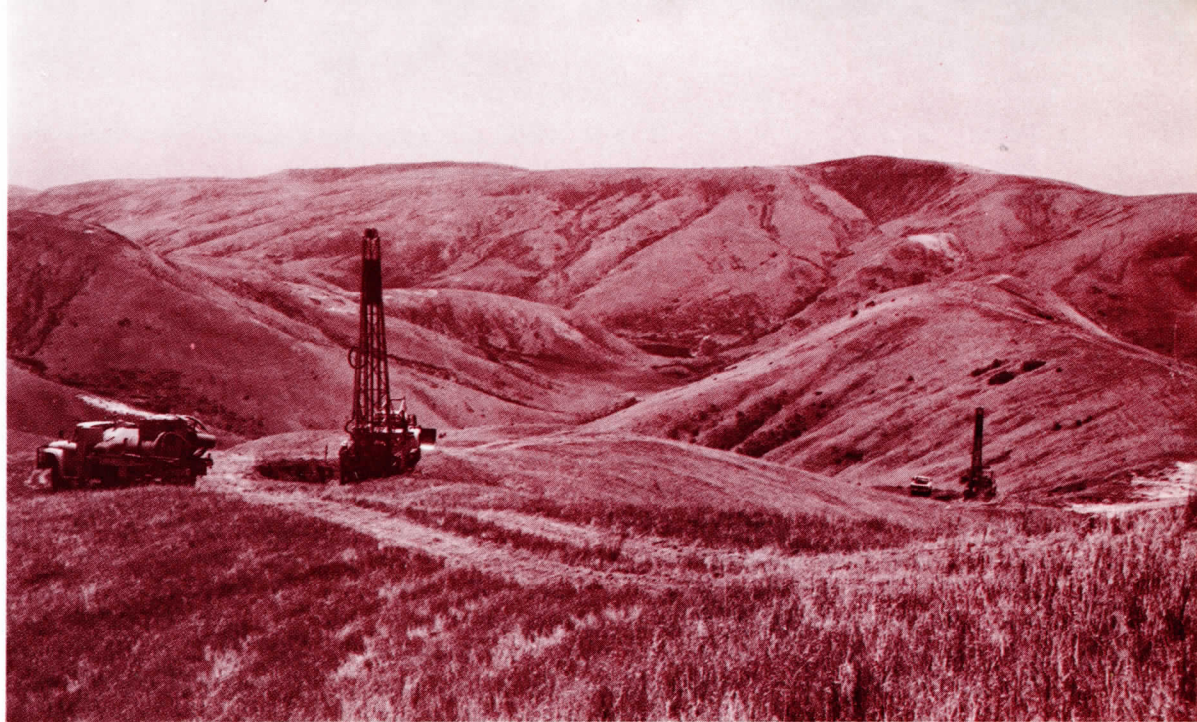
Up to this point Area Manager Harold Murphree and Supervisor John Adams had been responsible for most of the advanced planning with our client. Nolen Webb had been hand-picked to party chief the crew, and it was now time to turn the operation over to Nolen and Pacific Coast Equipment Supervisor Tom Sergeant. To help Tom with equipment preparation, Ollie Krein was brought down from our Anchorage shop. Nolen, Tom, and Ollie thus began planning and executing the million and one details required for the two beach landings and subsequent crew operations.

Lady Luck was smiling, and the preliminary landing was successful. With the bulldozer and light units on the beach setting up "dead men" for the big landing craft to tie onto and smoothing out a steep hill just beyond the beach that all of the equipment must negotiate to reach the selected camp site, the stage was set on the island for the big "invasion."



Santa Rosa Island's lone airstrip is this cow pasture, where only light planes can land; and no new airstrip was permitted to be bulldozed.

Party 9 is drilling along one of the many ridges on mountainous, rough Santa Rosa Island. There are no roads on this private island, and the only trails are those absolutely needed for ranching purposes.

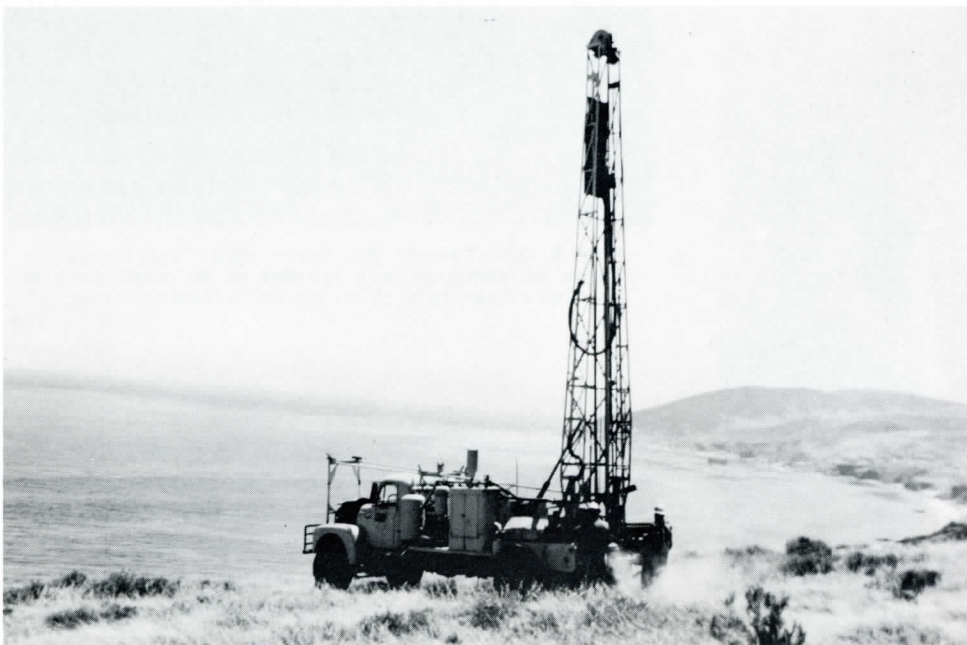


Attention now turned to the major assembly area at Long Beach, California, where the LST that would carry the bulk of the crew's equipment was waiting to be loaded. The camp equipment had arrived from Denver, and the seismic equipment had been driven to Long Beach from Bakersfield, California. The stage was set in Long Beach.

Weeks before the equipment was assembled at Long Beach, the position each truck or trailer was to occupy on the LST deck had been drawn to scale on a deck plan

supplied by the LST owners. Each piece of equipment was to be backed into position so that once the LST hit the beach the trucks could drive off quickly. The light, fast units, such as pickups, were to be loaded closest to the ramp and would be first off. The bulldozer already on the beach would assist the heavier units and those pulling trailers negotiate the steep hill just beyond the beach.

Nolen now called on Drillers Charles Martin, Glenn Murray, and Eildon Finkbeiner, Chief Observer Neo



From the mountains to the sea!
This Party 9 drill is working
right on the edge of the Pacific
Ocean where it meets Santa
Rosa Island near California.

Ferrari, Shooter Jim Mootry, Helpers Allen and John Holty (who transferred down from Alaska), Driller Herman Roundtree, and Dozer Operator Frank Willas to help Tom and Ollie load the LST. Because everything had been scaled out in advance, Nolen knew that the trucks and trailers would fit comfortably onto the LST deck. The LST skipper was not so sure, however, when he saw all of the crew's equipment and trailers lined up on the dock and would not believe Nolen until the last piece of equipment was on board. We were not sure that he believed it even at this point; he kept looking at the dock area where the equipment had been lined up and then at his loaded LST, just shaking his head!

Once again Lady Luck smiled. The LST departed Long Beach at midnight on the appointed day and hit the beach at 11:30 the next morning after a 60-mile channel crossing, and all of the equipment and supplies were unloaded and on the beach at 1:30 P.M. the same day. Total time elapsed for unloading — two hours. By 6:00 P.M. all equipment and trailers had arrived at the designated camp site, and camp had been set up. By 8:00 P.M. everyone had his first hot meal on the island. First objective accomplished. Second objective, a successful seismic operation.

Without a surveyor it is rather tough to start a seismic operation; and when, on the afternoon the barge was being loaded, Surveyor George Underwood still had not arrived from Alaska, Nolen began to wonder if he could still run an instrument after all these years! George must have had

it figured pretty close, though, because he and his family, who were driving down from Anchorage, arrived just in the nick of time.

George and Helper Ken Miller quickly found out that this island was no ordinary prospect. Steep mountains and narrow valleys with very few trails to negotiate them were the rule, not the exception. Beautiful country, but rough and windy. This was known in advance, however; so all equipment sent was all-wheel or tandem drive. Personnel were carefully selected on the basis of experience in rough terrain areas such as Alaska or the Rocky Mountain states. Existence of inadequate water supply along the seismic lines was anticipated; so air/water combination drills were provided.

Restrictions in the permit our client had with the ranch owner dictated that a maximum effort should be made in

Before starting a new line on the island, the Party 9 cable crew poses for a picture beside its truck. From the left are: James Webb, John Dennis, Tom Plumb, and Mike Ciaramitain.



Party 9 Chief Observer Neo Ferrari (right) and Shooter Jim Mootry are setting up for a recording on the rough terrain of Santa Rosa Island, off the coast of southern California.

the initial survey. Thus, 48-trace binary gain digital instrumentation was provided, and shot-point intervals were kept short enough to obtain maximum common depth point coverage. Steep dips, complicated faulting, and extreme near surface weathering changes were anticipated; so careful attention had to be given to both field operating procedures and processing parameters. It had to be a



Nolen Webb was hand-picked to be party chief for this operation, and the client's permit required that both he and a client representative be on the island at all times when work was under way.

maximum effort under tough field conditions. Also, it had to be done quickly and efficiently since our client had a very short time in which to make major decisions involving leasing and drilling.

Thus, it was up to Chief Observer Ferrari, Observer Darris Mason, and the cable crew members, John Dennis, James Webb, Mike Ciaramitain, Rick Anderson, Doug

Green, Steve Schofield, and Rick Holt, to keep the recording crew moving across tough terrain that would have provided a good training ground for distance runners working on their stamina. Drillers Murray, Roundtree, and Al Linder, who replaced Eildon when he transferred to another California crew, had to keep enough holes ahead so as not to slow down the recording crew — and this they did. Driller-Mechanic Martin set up a little tent shop at camp and kept equipment breakdown time to a minimum. Also at camp, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Lynn saw to it that no one went hungry. Their consistently excellent meals kept even the most discriminating of the crew happy at meal time.

Expediter-Computer Steve Cymbala says that he may not have seen all of the action on the island but that he surely saw a lot in Port Hueneme, California, directing traffic for boats, airplanes, and personnel coming and going.

During the course of the survey, Safety Supervisor Sean Staddon managed to work in a visit. Was it cold in Calgary that week, Sean?! Sean's visit was timely, however, in view of the tough terrain and special logistical problems.

And so it was. The entire operation, from landing on the island to completing the assigned program and once again loading all equipment on the barge to return it to the mainland, was accomplished in just 60 days. The entire effort required extremely close co-ordination between our client representatives and Western's supervisory staff, plus a lot of hard work from everyone concerned. It required a crew that was not only hardworking but experienced and intelligent. Happily, all of the elements were there.

High on a ridge in the mountains of Santa Rosa Island Driller Alan Linder (left) and Helper John Holtz are drilling for Party 9. In the valley below them (right) are other crew vehicles.

